

IDS

Applicants concurrently file an IDS, identifying Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication (Kokai) No. H09-114150. This reference discloses a copier in which sheets each having a tab are stacked on a tab tray thereof, and images are formed on the tab sheets. Specifically, a plurality of sets of tab sheets are stacked on the tab tray, with each set including a plurality of tab sheets each having a tab at different positions. In a tab copy mode, if a third tab sheet jams after a fourth tab sheet has been fed, a fifth tab sheet and the first and second tab sheets of the next set are fed and discharged to the outside of the copier without any image formation. See column 12, lines 48-50 and column 13, lines 106.

This reference also would not have disclosed or taught assigning and reading any identification information to the tab sheets, let alone detecting whether a tab sheet is for the top sheet in a given set of tab sheets based on the identification information.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that the pending claims patentably distinguish over the applied references and are in condition for allowance. Should the examiner have any issues concerning this reply or any other outstanding issues remaining in this application, applicants urge the examiner to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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26 APRIL 2006

DATE

/Lyle Kimms/

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REG. NO. 34,079 (RULE 34, WHERE APPLICABLE)

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